

Jill Brock

Observations of Author Website

- The cover of the book is eye-catching on the home page, and the brief synopsis is a great addition.
- The color scheme of the site is very soothing, and encourages the reader to stick around.
- Website URL is not the same as author name (i.e. www.jillbrock.com). This is confusing to search engines that seek consistency; this can also be confusing for her audience that seeks her out by typing www.jillbrock.com.
- There is no link to the author's blog from her website.
- Home page is strictly about first book; with new book in productions, it is time to begin talking about that book also.
- META tag does not mention that Jill Brock is an author.

Recommendations for Author Website

- Put author's head shot on home page, as well as a shot of her newest title; search engines place emphasis on home pages over all others, so it is important to get her name on the home page as much as possible.
- Place author's head shot on each subsequent page, and add a page for articles/other things of interest.
- Change website META tag to "Author Jill Brock"
- Secure www.jillbrock.com and have domain host point it to current website www.jillbrock.com; this should be one of the first steps as currently, the discrepancy between the URL and the author's actual name is creating a message the search engines can't read.
- Keep home page header with author's name consistent on all pages (i.e. "About the Author" page should have the "Jill Brock" header. The header should link directly to the home page.
- Link website directly to blog.
- Post articles or items of interest to the website on a regular basis; the more frequently updated, the more frequently the site will be crawled by search engines, thus increasing page rankings. These could be things like photos from appearances, any press releases or mentions, articles written for other markets, etc.
- Author should link to her LinkedIn profile, as well as any other social networking sites she maintains.

Observations of Author Blog (<http://jillbrock.blogspot.com>)

- Author blog looks entirely differently than author website; no continuity which is confusing for readers.
- Author blog is not posted to regularly.
- Blog has no link to author website, nor is there a direct link to Amazon where book is sold.

- Blog is labeled as "Jilli Writes," which again causes confusion for two reasons. The switch from "Jill" to "Jilli," while her name is actually "Jill," and the header of "Jilli Writes," as opposed to the author name. The blog URL choice may have to do with the fact that www.jillbrock.blogspot.com is taken, however, I do not know by whom.

Recommendations for Author Blog

- Post to author blog at least three times per week; entries do not need to be lengthy, but should mention the names of available titles in a conversational manner. Blogs are the most frequently crawled sites, and therefore, it is important to focus time and attention on the blog.
- When posting to the blog, author needs to be careful that she is proofreading her grammar, spelling, and punctuation; since this is an author blog, readers expect it to be pristine. If the blog is difficult to follow, and if readers have not yet had a chance to read the first book, they will be wary of making a purchase.
- There needs to be a link from the blog to the author's website.
- There needs to be a link from the blog to Amazon where the book can be purchased.
- Author should create a blogroll that links to her favorite authors and websites; this is the quickest way to create incoming links.
- Author should contact Blogger to see if it is possible to take down and re-assign www.jillbrock.blogspot.com to this author. Blog has not been posted to, and it appears that it has been active since 2006; author can make a good case to have the URL re-directed.
- If the above is not possible, the blog needs to be seamlessly pointed to from the website, and all of the same links must be available on the blog that are on the website. Essentially, the blog should serve as a natural extension from the website, and should be navigated in the same way.
- Blog header should be the same as website header; this level of customization is available through Blogger where her blog is currently located, therefore, this should not be difficult.

In Conclusion

Jill is on the right track with her website, but if she hopes to grab her readers interest, she needs to take the site to the next level. By implementing the above changes, she should begin to see an increase in hits and search engine rankings; that said, I cannot stress enough the importance of the blog and devoting regular time to it. In her blog, Jill mentions that she actually does not like the actual act of blogging, so she may want to consider seeking a professional blogger that would be willing to create and make her posts for her in a ghost written manner.

To create a consistent look and feel to the website and blog, it is important that each page be laid out the same, and that the header is the same. Currently the "About the Author" page has a different header, as does "Excerpt." "Contact Me" has no header at all. Additionally, it is important that the author create additional pages that give the user more content. As it stands, there is not enough content on her site to keep the reader there for very long. Reader reviews would be a great addition to the site, as would photos of Jill doing readings at local book stores. When creating the additional pages for the website, one page should be devoted strictly to her books. Vertically organized, a cover shot of each one, with a very short synopsis, as well as a link to buy them. Press releases should be issued whenever news of her book changes - a release, an appearance, etc. These should be filed on a Press Page.

Jill should consider writing a more detailed bio, and presenting it in the third person. Eventually, it would be great to see a short vlog clip of the author talking about her passion for writing, and what makes her relate to the two characters she so loves to write about. A great second vlog would be her thoughts on the success of the first book, and the process of creating the second.

Rather than having a form template on the “contact me” page, Jill could take a more personal approach and give her readers her email address. This should be something like jill@jillbrock.com if possible. Also, giving her readers the option of signing up for a mailing list that will notify them of upcoming appearances and the release of her book would be an easy step towards fostering relationships with her readers.

Next Steps

I would like to help the author create new copy for her site, or help her get organized by breaking these marketing steps down in to more manageable pieces. After, it will be time to work on her marketing plan, and get her more involved in social marketing, as well as blogging.